

Last Name _____

Application
Farms for the Future, Phase I
Business Plan Development Program

If you farm 5 or more acres that you own, anticipate keeping your land in agriculture for at least 5 years and you have an idea for making a change or improvement that will make you more economically and/or environmentally sound, we encourage you to fill out this application. You may be eligible for technical assistance in developing a business plan. A second phase will provide financial assistance to implement the plan (25% of need up to \$25,000). It is our goal to help you if we can.

The questions in the application are designed to guide you in giving us the information we need. What is important is that you give us a clear picture of where you are and what your vision is. Please do the best you can to describe your current situation and your idea for change in the space provided. If you are downloading the application, please note that it is a 4-page document. It is important that the pages and spacing stay the same, especially pages 2 and 3. This is all the Review Panel sees.

Phase II Implementation grants will be awarded based on the results of Phase I. There will be opportunities to apply for these grants in the spring and fall.

The deadline for this round is August 27, 2004. I recommend that you submit now so I can inform you of any changes. Please return to Mort Mather, CEI, 2 Portland Fish Pier, Portland, ME 04101.

Name _____

Farm _____ County _____

Address _____

Town _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

Town_____ County_____

Total farmland acreage owned _____ Total owned acres in production _____

How long have you been farming this land? _____ How long have you owned it? _____

What is your farming background?

What else in your background contributes to your capability as a farm manager?

Describe idea for change in 6 words or less, then in a paragraph.

Describe anticipated economic benefit of the proposed change.

Will this change have a positive environmental effect? _____ If yes, describe.

Describe suitability and productivity of the land for agricultural use based on its soil classification, physical features and location.

| Equipment | Condition | Buildings (type & size) | Condition |
|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Gross income from farm last year \$ _____

Acreage you lease _____ Acreage leased from you _____

This farm is primarily (If more than one apply, number in order of income):

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> diversified | <input type="checkbox"/> greenhouse | <input type="checkbox"/> beef |
| <input type="checkbox"/> vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> flowers | <input type="checkbox"/> dairy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> grain | <input type="checkbox"/> herbs | <input type="checkbox"/> sheep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> berries | <input type="checkbox"/> ornamentals | <input type="checkbox"/> poultry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> orchard | <input type="checkbox"/> potted plants | <input type="checkbox"/> horses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> maple syrup | <input type="checkbox"/> mushrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> commodity _____ |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

| Farm product | Acres involved | Building(s) involved | '04 Anticipated gross/net | 2003 gross/net | 2002 gross/net |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | / | / | / |
| | | | / | / | / |
| | | | / | / | / |
| | | | / | / | / |
| | | | / | / | / |

Please identify any farm debt, including mortgage. If none, so state.

| Amount outstanding | Held by | Payment schedule |
|--------------------|---------|------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Family members living on the farm

| Family member | % of time working on farm | % of time working off farm | Off-farm income |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Owner | | * | \$ |
| | | | \$ |
| | | | \$ |
| | | | \$ |

*If the owner is not principally engaged in agricultural activities, please state the short and long-term plans for keeping the property in agricultural use.

Describe any pressure that might cause you to stop farming.

You must fill in and sign the form below.

I/we, _____, authorize a
(print)
representative of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources to conduct a field inspection of the land to be covered by the plan.

The information in this form is factual.

Signature of owner(s)

Contact: Mort Mather, CEI, 2 Portland Fish Pier, Suite 201, Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 207-772-5356, ext. 114; e-mail: mkm@ceimaine.org

ATTACHMENT REQUIRED

Copies of Schedule F or 1120S forms for the 3 most recent tax years. If not available, describe why, what you have been doing toward making the farm viable, and describe the condition of the acreage.

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PLEASE NOTE: The following is required of all successful applicants. If you receive a grant of technical assistance, you must submit the following items before any work can begin. It is strongly advised that you line up this information in advance, especially the NRCS map and farm plan.

- A map of the property on a United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) Topographical Map showing the land area to be covered by the plan, and the land to be covered by a possible farmland protection agreement, if different than the land covered by the plan.
- A United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources and Conservation Service map and farm plan, or its equivalent, showing the breakdown of various soil types and acreage possessing soil capability Classes I through VI. (If you do not have this item, you should begin the process now.)
- Letters of reference concerning management capability.
- A copy of the current deed(s) to all the parcels of the property and a plan recorded in the registry of deeds delineating the property, book and page numbers included.

Farms for the Future

Phase I, Technical assistance leading toward a business plan.

I. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must own at least 5 acres of land in agricultural use and must submit an application to the Department to be eligible for participation in the program.

2. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Farms applying under the program, in addition to eligibility requirements in Subsection 6.1, must demonstrate the following and shall be scored accordingly:

A. The degree of opportunity for increasing the vitality of the farm due to:

- a. The number of years and type of agricultural experience and training of the applicant and/or co-applicant.
- b. The suitability and productivity of the land for agricultural use based on its soil classification, physical features and location.
- c. The condition and suitability of the physical resources of the farm (equipment and buildings).
- d. The number of acres of land to be placed in the program.

B. The degree of threat to the continuation of agricultural use of the land due to:

- a. The management capability of the applicant to effect positive changes in farm operations and the financial capacity of the farm operation.

Farms for the Future

Background Sheet

The Maine Farms for the Future program is an **economic development strategy** targeting farms. Although commonly viewed as an industry without much future, Maine agriculture actually has enormous potential for growth. Some great opportunities lie in niche products or specialty marketing; new territory for many Maine farms. Other opportunities lie in simply honing existing skills, or making new investments in proven practices. This program supports those farms that are trying to innovate or improve.

The Maine Farms for the Future Program will provide selected farms with:

- assistance in developing new business plans aimed at increasing farm viability
- a grant of 25% of the funds needed to implement the plan up to \$25,000.

In exchange for this support, participating farms must enter into a farmland protection agreement that prevents their land from being developed for non-agricultural purposes for five years. The agreement may be terminated by paying back the grant.

Farms compete for the opportunity to receive program support under a process established by the Maine Department of Agriculture and administered by Coastal Enterprises, Inc. Selection criteria include:

- the degree of opportunity for increasing the vitality of the farm,
- the threat to the continuation of farming due to development pressures and current farm practices, and
- the degree of positive environmental change.

The program responds directly to one of the primary needs within the farming community: *specialized business assistance*. Many small-scale farmers have an idea for a new product or marketing strategy, but lack the resources to develop the idea into a viable business plan.

Maine Farms for the Future is modeled after Massachusetts' Farm Viability Enhancement Program, a highly successful initiative that has increased net annual income at participating farms by an average of \$21,676. Massachusetts officials attribute their success to the fact that business assistance is: 1) provided by people with extensive farming knowledge; and 2) individualized to each client farm's particular needs and opportunities. These hallmarks of success have been missing from many other attempts to enhance farm viability.

In the pilot stage of the program, business plans were developed for 33 farms. \$200,000 was awarded to ten farms to help them implement their plans. Over 6,000 acres were protected from development through a non-development agreement. The bond issue passed in June 2003 contains \$2 million to continue the program.

Anyone interested in applying should contact Mort Mather at 772-5356, ext. 114, or mkm@ceimaine.org. Information is also available on CEI's website, www.ceimaine.org